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Some Early Amulets from Palestine.—By JAMES A. MONTGOMERY, Assistant Professor in the University of Pennsylvania.

THE following inscriptions are in the possession of Mrs. Henry Draper of New York and the New York Public Library. Dr. Billings, Librarian of the latter institution, placed some of the photographs in the hands of Prof. W. Max Müller, who generously handed them over to me; and subsequently Dr. Billings and Mrs. Draper allowed me most liberally full access to the originals, along with permission to publish them. But the original inscriptions are so minute that any study of them has been made on the photographic reproductions, which fortunately magnified and rendered more distinct the fine and worn characters of the originals.

The originals were once all in the possession of Mrs. Draper, who gave most of them to the New York Public Library. The following account of them is given in the *Bulletin* of that Library, vol. XII (1908), p. 5, as follows: "Three Hebrew amulets of silver and two of gold, in silver and glass frames, one of the gold amulets having attached the gold cylinder case in which it was worn, all having been found at Irbid [in the Hauran in 1853] and belonging in date to about the second to the fifth Centuries, A.D."

The discoverer of the inscriptions is a dealer in oriental antiquities in New York City, and from him I obtained the following information:

"The amulets Dr. Billings sent you to translate were found in tombs excavated under my personal supervision at Irbid in the Hauran, Syria. Some of them were found last summer [1909] and some two and three years ago.¹ They were worn

¹ This is discrepant with the date given in the *Bulletin*. The writer then alludes to a long inscription of similar character, (but evidently late) now in possession of Messrs. Tiffany & Co., New York, which has been partly translated by Dr. William Hayes Ward.

in cases of gold (Mrs. Draper has three or four of the gold cases), sometimes in bone cases."

Irbid lies east of the southern end of the Lake of Galilee, just west of the Haj route, and is now an important town.¹ As indicated above, the inscriptions are written on small pieces of metal foil, the largest of them being less than $4 \times 1\frac{1}{2}$ inches in size, and were folded in gold or bone capsules. The minuteness of the script appears upon observing that one of the inscriptions (A) contains 32 lines, and another which is still smaller, 42 lines.

A.

Inscription of 32 lines on silver foil, in possession of the New York Public Library; $3\frac{3}{4} \times 1\frac{3}{8}$ inches. After line 9 follow several rows of conventional round figures, with some characters which recall the Greek alphabet; then a line of larger figures mostly rectilinear. One figure is a cross with a small circle at each end. The circles probably indicate the magician's seal; compare the use of the circle in the incantation bowls.

Text.

- 1 ובחטרה דמשה ובציצה דאהרן
- 2 כהנה רבה ובעוקתה דשלמה וב[מנ]
- 3 נה דדוד ובקופתה דמרבה אפ[ר]שת
- 4 לקלה אני יהוה ומחדתא ע . . .
- 5 . . תהום בנאבת שהפר שמני[ה]
- 6 [מ]ן שמנת ובה דמרין ברתה ד[שהפר]
- 7 ועולה דבמעיה מן יומי[עלם]
- 8 ועד ולעלם אמן אמן סלה
- 9 . . . מ . . א . . צת . . . מ . . א
- 10 אלו תנאל ביה אברהם אבן
- 11 [בחת]ם מבעיה ושמע ללחשי .
- 12 לשם מתין דקומו עולם ועד נה
- 13 שיה דתפק את גרת הו ש . . .
- 14 [ו]ית מבלעיה אשבעתיה וה
- 15 שה אבי תנערון מן מרין ומן
- 16 עולה דבמעיה . . . ביהויה

¹ See Baedeker, *Palästina u. Syrien* ⁵ p. 185; Merrill, *East of the Jordan*, p. 293. Extensive ruins exist here and the place has been identified with Arbela.

17 מן דגלה יהו צבאות שמייה
 18 אמן ומן מרין בריתה דש דה
 19 ומן עולה דיהא בי שתה הרה
 20 בשמייה דאלהא רבא [א]
 21 מן הללויה לעד אמן סלה]
 22 שלם למרין בריתה דש דה
 23 ולעולה דלגו מעיה מן
 24 לילית קלתה דבנאת ... ש
 25 מריה מלאך יהו ישמך
 26 ה לעלמין הללו ליה בנ[בת]
 27 שהפר דין ולמרין ברת
 28 ה ש דה ולעולה דבמעיה
 29
 30 [ולעולה] דבמעיה בנזיתה
 31 .. תה ומן מרין ברת שהפ
 32 [ר] אמן [הללויה] סלה

Translation.

1. And now with the wand of Moses and the shining-plate of Aaron
2. the high priest, and with the seal of Solomon, and with [the shield]
3. of David, and with the mitre of the chief priest, have I pronounced (?)
4. [the word: I am YHWH, and repeatedly [have I exer-
5. cis]ed them on behalf of Šahpur, his name,
6. of (?) ŠMNT, and for Marian his daughter
7. and the unborn-child in her bowels, from the days [of ever]
8. and aye and forever. Amen, Amen, Selah.
9. ? ? ?
10. Oh, intercede in behalf of him, Abraham our father.
11. With a seal (?) stamp him. And hear my prayer
12. on account of the dead: "Rise ye forever and ever," (?) that his so-
13. ul thou bring forth. Do thou drive out that ... ?)
14. and his devourer I have exorcised. And n-
15. ow, my father, scold them away from Marian and from
16. the unborn-child in her bowels, by Yahweh (?),
17. who has been (so) revealed—Yahû Sebaoth is his name,
18. Amen; and from this Marian daughter of Š,
19. and from the unborn-child which shall be this year.

20. In the name of the great God, A-
21. men, Halleluia, Forever, Amen, Selah.
22. Peace to this Marian daughter of Š.
23. and to the unborn-child which is in her bowels, from
24. the lilith of her canopy. . . . She-
25. mariah [(?)] angel of Yahû protect (?)
26. her for ages. Hallelu le-Yah, on behalf of
27. this Šahpur and for this Marian daughter
28. of Š. and for the unborn-child in her bowels
29. ? ? ?
30. [and for the unborn-child] in her bowels in her body
31. . . . and from Marian daughter of Šahp-
32. ur. Amen, [Halleluia], Selah.

Notes.

Line 1. The sorcerer claims to be armed with the full magical equipment of the magicians of yore.¹ חמור is the Targumic translation of the biblical מטה of Moses (e. g. *Targ. Onk.* to Ex. 42). The צינה is the biblical ציץ, the plate of gold on the high priest's mitre, e. g. Lev. 89.

Line 2. David's magical perquisite was his shield, and so I restore at the end of this and the beginning of the following line, מגנה. This is probably the earliest literary reference to that magical element; see *JQR.* XIV, p. 111, for an early (3d century?) representation of it.

Line 3. The term indicating the priest's property I conjectured to be the mitre, and following a suggestion of Professor Jastrow, comparing the Biblical פובע, קובע, "helmet," I suppose that קופתה refers to a high head-dress. The theme KB, KP, &c. appears in various forms, in the sense, "heap up, be gibbous," &c. Compare also the root גבע, with its derivative מְגִבְעוֹת, "turban" of the ordinary priest, and the Syriac קפא, "heap up." The latter root illustrates the פ in our word.

The מרבה is the high priest of the second temple (מְרִיבָה), when no anointing was practised, so called because of his

¹ Cf. the Greek magical papyri, e. g. Wessely, *Griechische Zauber-papyrus*, *Wiener Denkschriften* XXXVI, 2, p. 129, l. 109 ff: "I am Moses thy prophet to whom thou gavest thy mysteries."

² The *Oxford Lexicon* lists these words alphabetically; but they should appear under כבט and קבע.

many garments.¹ The last word in the line I conjecturally restore to אפרשת, Afel; in the sense "pronounce" the word is generally used in the Pael, but the Afel appears as variant in the ancient Bamberger Codex of *Targum Onkelos* to Lev. 27, Num. 62.²

Line 4. אני is fairly certain. מחרתא I take to be the fem. of the Pael ppl. used adverbially. Verbs may be supposed at the end of the line and the beginning of the next (the latter with the pronominal suffix הוּם), which would express the operation of the magical apparatus.

Line 5. בנאבת (with pleonastic א) is parallel to the Jewish Aramaic על גבי, אַנְב, "on account of," with feminine pl. ending instead of the masculine.³ It is resumed with ב in the next line, and is probably to be read in l. 26, being resumed there with ל. שהפר is a unique and early spelling of the famous Persian name Šahpuhre, appearing in the Semitic dialects as Šabor. The first great king of this name flourished in the third century, but the name was an old one in Persia.⁴

Line 6. שַׁמְנַת: the missing latter may be ב or מ. We should expect the parent's, especially the mother's name to be mentioned; but the Aramaic would require בר, unless we may suppose that the Hebrew בן has persisted. שַׁמְנַת would be a good feminine name, i. e. "fat," or possibly שַׁמְנַת, "Octavia." If מן be read, ש is the name of a place. מרין is the Hebrew מרים, the נ is unique. It may be a local dialectic form; cf. עמרן and עמרם. A similar prayer for the unborn child, לעולא, ולבאמנא, appears in one of the (unpublished) Mandaic incantation bowls in the University of Pennsylvania Museum.

Line 10. אלו = if the first character is correctly read, the biblical לוי and Targumic אֱלֹוֹי. The following verb is the biblical and Rabbinic נאל; the accompanying preposition ב is peculiar, but is not out of place with a verb of touch. This prayer to Father Abraham is unique, although the atoning and intercessory power of the Fathers is a prevailing Jewish doctrine.⁵ The form of the prayer recalls the supplication of the rich man in hell to Father Abraham in the parable in

¹ See *Yoma* 73 a, and Levy, *Neuhebr. u. chald. Wörterbuch*, IV, p. 413.

² See Berliner, *Targ. Onk. ad loc.*

³ For the feminine form cf. the Syriac קרמ = קורמת.

⁴ See Justi, *Iran. Namenbuch*, p. 284.

⁵ Weber, *Jüdische Theologie*, pp. 292 ff, 326 ff.

Lu. 16. **אבן** is the probable reading at end of the line, but **אבי** appears in l. 15.

Line 11. **מבעה** is sure, and I restore the preceding word to **חתם** at a venture. In magical language Abraham is asked to stamp the dead man as his own. Compare the sealing of the redeemed in Rev. 74, and the comments upon Ezek. 94 in *Shabbath* 55 a: "The Holy One said to Gabriel: Go and mark with ink a Taw upon the forehead of the righteous that the angels of destruction, **מלאכי הבלה**, may have no power over them," &c.; and further on: "Taw is the last latter of the Holy One, for R. Hanina said. The seal of the Holy One is **אמת** (truth)." The suffixal form **הי...** is characteristic of Onkelos in the imperative. **לחש** is a common biblical and Rabbinic word for a spell. There is room for a missing character at the end of this line and at the beginning of the next.

Line 12. The particle **ו** introduces the following imperative quotation, as in Syriac. **עולם ועד** is without **ל** as in Ps. 215. Some incantation of magical import is here quoted; cf. the fragment of an early Christian hymn in Eph. 514: "Awake thou that sleepest, and arise from the dead, and the Christ shall give thee light."

Line 13. My restoration **נפשיה דתפק** is possible so far as the remains of the characters are concerned, but the interpretation of the whole passage is not satisfactory. **את** may be the pronoun, while **נרת** may be the Hebrew and Rabbinic **גרש**, supposing an original stem *grt*. The final word would then represent some evil spirit; but it may possibly be **שהפר**, which would alter the interpretation of **נרת**.

Line 14. **מבלעה**: cf. the legend in *Sifre* of the **מלאכים רעים** who await the death of the wicked to tear out his soul,¹ and n. b. Satan's part in disputing over the body of Moses, Jude 9.

Line 15. **תנערן**: n. b. the jussive without the parengogic **נ**. This verb often appears in the bowl incantations in the quotation of Zech. 32.

Lines 16 f. At the end **יהויה** is most likely to be read; this would be then the expression of the pronunciation of the Tetragrammaton, as preserved in Samaritan tradition,² and

¹ Weber, *op. cit.* p. 339.

² See Montgomery, *JBL* XXV (1906), p. 49.

corresponding to the modern pronunciation Yahwe. This is a unique spelling in Hebrew.¹ In the next line גלה is evident, and doubtless refers to the revelation contained in יהויה; it is probably the passive particle (cf. Biblical Aramaic), and practically equivalent to המפורש,² יהויה being actually the שם המפורש. The letters preceding גלה are uncertain. There follows יהו צבאות, cf. יהו in l. 25. This is exceptional in the magical forms of the Tetragrammaton, and archaic; cf. Assouan Papyri.

Line 18. דש דה: the restoration is made from l. 28.

Line 19. יהא and בי both Targumic; for the latter cf. Targ. Yerush. Num. 22 2s. Here the pronoun הרא and in ll. 18, 28 רא, and the masc. דין, l. 27.

Line 24. קלתה or קלתה = canopied-couch, see Jastrow. *Dict. of the Talmud*. Evil spirits lurked especially in roofs, trees, and all kinds of coverings, and were most noxious in proximity of a bed. The latter part of the line is obscure. The last letter in the line may be ש, to make שמריה = שמריאל, a favorite angel of charms.³ את may be the pronoun of address to the angel.

Line 26. הללו ליה: various perversion of this magical word are found, e. g. in the Greek magical papyri.

Line 28. We expect the particle ד before ש, but there is no room for it (ה is almost certain). I have found cases in the Mandaic bowls from Nippur where after the pronominal suffix ד is omitted, the suffix appearing sufficient to establish the genitive relation. So also in the Assouan papyri; we find the relative particle omitted in the construction "year x of such a king," e. g. Sachau's *Papyrus A*, l. 19, שנת XIII דיהוש. For the abbreviation ש for שהפר, cf. Sayce and Cowley, *Assouan Papyri*, E 17, בר = בר ידניה; also the Talmudic abbreviations.

Line 30. גויתה, the Targumic גויתא, Jastrow, *op. cit.* p. 221 a; also found in Ben Sira 41 11.

The charm is made out for the repose of soul of a certain מרין and for the health of his daughter שהפר, who is pregnant. In the latter part, the scribe has not very much to add and monotonously repeats the subjects of his charm. But the first

¹ Perhaps the same pronunciation is also intended in the magical term יהיה, found in the text published by Stübe, *Jüdisch-babylonische Zaubertexte*, l. 15.—P.S. The same form I also find in texts at Pennsylvania.

² See Arnold's discussion in *JBL* XXIV (1905), p. 157 ff.

³ See Schwab, *Vocabulaire de l'angéologie*, s. v.

part of the charm is fresh and original in comparison with the usual stereotyped forms of incantation.

The orthography is marked by absence of vowel letters, e.g. such words as עוקתה, שלמה, שהפר, עלם; yet עולם, דויד, עולה. Final ה appears instead of א, as in early Aramaic, and as in the Samaritan usage; the one exception is אלהא, where א is used after ה. The masculine suffix is written יה, to distinguish it from the feminine.

The forms of pronoun, verb, &c., can all be exemplified from the early Palestinian Targums, and the vocabulary is of like character. The noun קופתה and the prepositional בנאבת are new. שהפר is an early and unique spelling.

The script is of the fully formed square type, but certainly early, as reference to Euting's tables in Chwolson, *Corpus inscriptionum hebraicarum* will show. I may specify the long left leg of ה, the single form for נ—a long perpendicular stroke, the lack of distinction between ד and ר, and the archaic פ. Taking into consideration the language and the spelling, I would assign the inscription to the second or third century after Christ. There may be also noticed the archaic use of continuing words over the line. The inscription would then be the oldest amulet of any length which we possess.

The charm largely consists in conventional Jewish phrases and repetitions. It contains however some novel features. The elaborate introduction, with the self-assertion of the conjurer, is of interest, and so is the union in the one charm of prayers for the dead and the living, and also for the unborn. Unique is the prayer to Abraham. The divine Name is spelled not only יהוה, but also, archaically, יהו, and יהויה, doubtless the phonetic representation of the pronunciation of the Ineffable Name.

B.

Inscription of 40 lines on silver foil, in possession of Mrs. Henry Draper of New York; $3\frac{1}{4} \times 1\frac{3}{8}$ inches. The charm is so obliterated that despite the use of a bromide enlargement I have been able to obtain but little consecutive sense from the inscription, and hence have not thought it worth while to give a reproduction. It appears to be of the same age as A, though the vocalization is very fully carried out, but differs from that in consisting largely of magical formulas. I give the little that is legible.

1. [מן בלה]
2. גן[פיה דמ. חיה ומן כלה גופה ד. . . .
4. פנעין
5. אמן אמן
7. קדוש קדוש קדוש קדוש
9. הנן עלי זנה א.
10. לכל בשר
11. מלכות יה
15. קדישה יאקירה
16. אהוש אהוש הפיכה הפיכה
17. הוש הוש
18. אהיה אשר אהיה
19. יהיה יהוה יה יהוה הוה
20. יהיה אתבש תון
21. שדי ניבור
24. רופיאל יה יהיה
25. הקדוש הגנלה למשה מחיר
26. יהוה ושמו מבורך אהיה אשר [אהיה]
33. פנואל יהוה

Line 9: "Protect this . . ."; n. b. ננה for רנה.

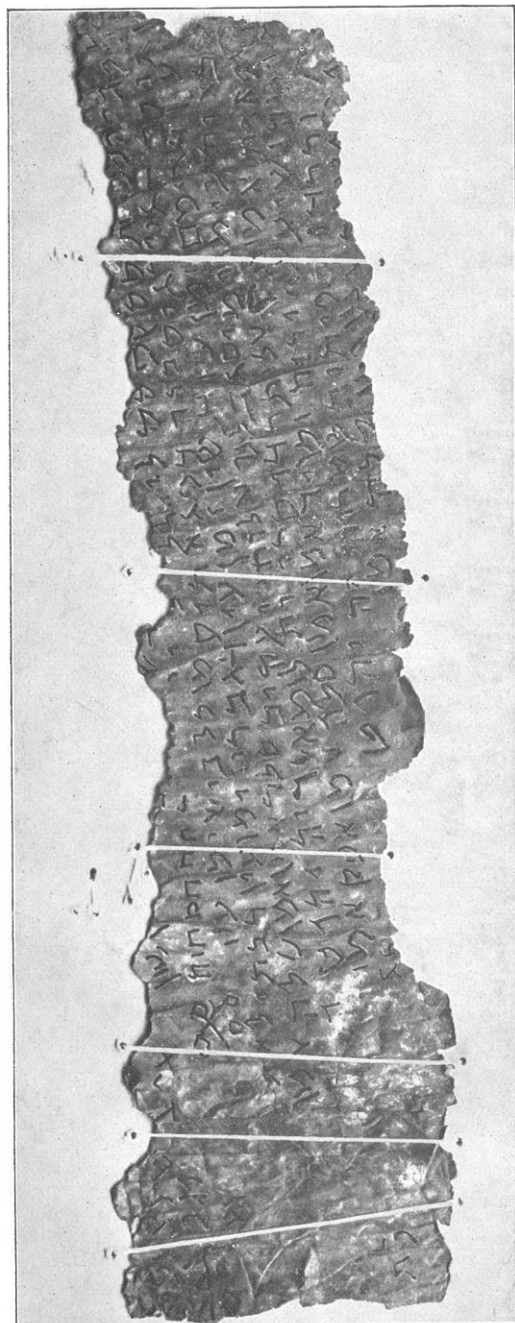
Line 16. אהוש = אהוש, "quickly," and הפיכה "avaunt," terms found in the incantation bowls.

Line 20. NB. אתבש used as a magical formula.

Line 24. רופיאל, a form of רפאל, found in Pognon's, *Coupees de Khouabir*, and in a Syriac bowl in the University of Pennsylvania, as also in Enoch. It stands for Rafael, with the Hebrew ppl. for the first component.

C.

A talisman on bronze foil (size unknown to me as I have not seen the original), in the New York Free Library. The remains of nine lines are visible. The first two lines are almost illegible. To the left are some magical signs, the only discernible one being a cross, whose arms terminate in a circle—the same figure is found in A. The charm is addressed against the evil eye and certain named calamities and demons, and was probably intended to be worn on the person. In my interpretation I have had the assistance in part of a translation made by Mr. S. A. Binion of New York. The charm is of a character that still survives in Palestine among the Jews; for examples see Hanauer, *Folk-Lore of the Holy Land* (London, n. d.) p. 318ff.



Text.

3. ונופה דגיורגיס ברה דפנאתים מן כל ביש ומן עין [דאבוהי]
4. [ומ]ן עין דאימה ומן עין דנשין ומן עין דנברין ומן עין דבתול[אתא]
5. [יהוה] צבאות עימנו מיסגב לנו אלוהי יעקוב סלה אמן סלה אמן
6. [יהוה] צבאות אמן . . אל ותדרו ס . . . ת לומא עריה יהוה
7. . . . ומהוש וצער ורוח ושיד אמן אמן סלה אמן אמן אמן
8. . . . אל ותדרו . . . יהוה שמרית . . . ה יהוה . . .
9. אמן אמן סלה אמן

Translation.

[Protect the . . .]

3. and the body of Georgios son of Pagatios from all evil, from the eye of [his father]
4. and from the eye of his mother and from the eye of women and from the eye of men and from the eye of virgins
5. [YHWH] Sebaoth is with us, the god of Jacob is our refuge. Selah, Amen, Amen, Selah, Amen.
6. [YHWH] Sebaoth, Amen . . .
7. . . . ailment and shame and spirit and demon. Amen, Amen, Selah, Amen, Amen, Amen, . . .
8. ? . . . ?
9. . . . Amen, Amen, Selah, Amen.

Notes.

Lines 6 and 8 have evidently some identical words, but both are almost entirely obscure. The last word in each may be **יהושע**, i. e. a name of salvation. Line 5 is a quotation of Ps. 46 8, 12.

In line 7 **מהוש** is for **מחוש** (מחוש), with equivalence of ה and ח as in the Babylonian incantation bowls. The vocalization is very fully expressed, e. g. in the scriptural quotation, which is written by ear and not from knowledge of the text. Both script and spelling refer this charm to a much later date than A. Georgios is a common name in late Greek and Syriac; Pagatios, or Pagatis, I have not found elsewhere.¹

¹ Professor Gottheil has given a brief account of these amulets in the *Journal asiatique*, X. ix (1907), p. 150.